Exploring the Future of Buddhism Through a Historical Perspective: Tzu Chi Buddhism as a Case Study

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Abstract: This paper discusses the future of Buddhism through a historical perspective, using Tzu Chi Buddhism as a case study. It explores why Buddhism came to an end in India and declined in China in the Ming and Qing dynasties, after one thousand nine hundred years of existence. It argues that with the origin of Buddhism in India two thousand six hundred years ago, the Buddha transformed the mysticism of Brahmaṇism into rational moral practice, emphasising the Eightfold Path and the Four Immeasurable Minds. The paper argues that the demise of Indian Buddhism in the thirteenth century can be attributed to the fact that, in its middle and late stages, Indian Buddhism overemphasised abstract philosophy of mind and monastic self-cultivation, and did not fully establish a universal "knowledge system" and "value system." Shifting to the contemporary period, it discusses how Tzu Chi Buddhism has responded to this history, building an organisation of lay followers over the past fifty years that has become one of the most rigorous groups of lay Buddhist followers in the world.

Keywords: Tzu Chi, Buddhism, Venerable Master Yinshun, Venerable Master Cheng Yen, Max Weber, monastic community, altruism, enlightenment, Śramaṇa, *upoṣadha*, Dharma, interdependent arising, Economy of Goodness, Aśoka, Brāhmaṇa, *Law of Manu*, Sectarian Buddhism, equality, Gupta Empire, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Lonely Elder, decline of lay People, Zen, Indian Buddhism, Venerable Master Taixu, Compassion, bodhisattva, public, Tzu Chi Studies

Preface

Why did Buddhism come to an end in India? Why did it decline in China in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties after one thousand nine hundred years of existence? As is well known, Indian Buddhism originated two thousand six hundred years ago when the Buddha travelled throughout India, transforming the mysticism of Brahmaṇism into rational moral practice with his teachings of the Eightfold Path (Skt. *aṣṭangika-mārga*) and the Four Immeasurable Minds (Skt. *apramāṇa*). In this respect, the Buddha was like Socrates, who shifted Greece from mythology towards rational cognition, and like Confucius, who transformed the "Sacrifice to Heaven" (*jitian* 祭天) into the "Way of Heaven" (*tiandao* 天道). As Karl Jaspers, the German existentialist philosopher, famously argued, these figures brought about the Axial Age and the human progression toward rational civilisation.[1]

The demise of Indian Buddhism in the thirteenth century can be attributed to the fact that, in its middle and late stages, Indian Buddhism overemphasised abstract philosophy of mind and monastic self-cultivation, and did not fully establish a universal "knowledge system" and "value system." The emphasis on the management of monks and the lack of attention to the life of lay followers, as Max Weber said, was the key to the demise of Buddhism in India.[2] According to Weber, Buddhism in India failed to build an organised secular community of lay followers; it emphasised the practice of monasticism and the management of the monastic community, but not the management of the lay people. According to Weber, this lack of an organised community of lay followers was the first factor that contributed to Buddhism's demise, the second being the lack of a rigorous ethic of secular life.[3]

Master Yinshun (1906–2005) shared this general view, and argued that senior monks and Buddhist intellectuals in India were primarily drawn toward exploring meditative states instead of constructing a system of knowledge for the mundane world. Meditation was inaccessible to ordinary people, who then turned to tantra, spells, and incantations, which he argued led them to being gradually assimilated into Brahmanism.[4] In their pursuit of esoteric

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[1] Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*.

[2] Weber, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, 371.

[3] Weber, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*.

philosophy, Buddhist monks could not construct practical systems of worldly knowledge, ethics, and values for the human world. Similarly, the decline of Buddhism in the Ming and Qing dynasties in China, after one thousand nine hundred years of existence, was due to an overemphasis on monastic temples, which left questions of worldly knowledge to Confucianism, which emphasises the way of officialdom and business.

A return to moral practice, as originally advocated by the Buddha, means pursuing a daily practice instead of searching for esoteric experiences. This is the ethos of Tzu Chi Buddhism, which has built an organisation of lay followers over the past fifty years. This organisation has become one of the most rigorous groups of lay Buddhist followers in the world, having developed the "Ten Precepts" (*Tzu Chi shi jie* 慈濟十戒) as an ethical code for its lay volunteers. Its emphasis on organising lay people and developing a Buddhist-based ethical code is different from the monastic-focus of historical Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism. The latter emphasised monastic practice and monastery management; monks were incense-bearers and believers came to perform devotion at the temples. Buddhism was not translated for the secular world and nor did it establish a rigorous secular organisation. As Weber pointed out, Indian Buddhism was not even comparable to Jainism in terms of the co-prosperity, unity, and cohesion of the monastic and secular communities.[5]

This historic backdrop inspires Tzu Chi to engage the world with the "Four Missions and Eight Endeavours" (*si dazhi ye, ba dafa yin* 四大志業、八大法印), which encourage altruism and self-improvement, as well as material improvement for all beings, and the purification and elevation of the mind. This religious practice represents a unique trend in the history of Buddhism.

Social Issues in India at the Time of the Buddha

Buddhism began around the sixth century BCE. This was a time of rapid political and economic transformation marked by disintegration in India's Paurava Kingdom. Politically, the kingdom, which had lasted for more than ten centuries, was divided into sixteen kingdoms in what is now North India. These terri-

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[4]   Yinshun, *Yindu zhi Fojiao*, 305, 331.
[5]   Weber, *Yindu de zongjiao*, 371.

tories attempted to dominate all of India, with the democratic state of Vajji and the monarchical state of Magadha fighting for supremacy.[6] The Indian economy was in its heyday, with a monetary economy replacing the cattle-based one. The power of commerce threatened kingship, and kings used legislation to prevent the commerce-led erosion of political power. The wealthy were in a state of insecurity, as they could be raided by political power at any time.[7]

In terms of faith, the Brāhmaṇa experienced great civilisational advances in architecture, logic, medicine, geometry, astronomy, law, and incantation in the tenth century BCE, and formed a comprehensive Vedic canon. Nevertheless, in the sixth century BCE, the hereditary Brahmin power declined. The Vedic doctrine became dogmatised, and its practice drifted toward mysticism. In a period of political and economic turmoil, the Brāhmaṇa were not able to offer a solution.[8]

The Buddha's Solution to His Age

It was during this period that the Buddha, who witnessed the chaos in India, advocated rationalism, proposing that rational morality was the basis for life and enlightenment. His solution was not in politics, economics, or in the world; it was outside the world. Detaching from everything in the world, and then returning to that world through the Buddha's purity and selflessness, became a model for people to follow a rational life. As A. K. Warder said:

> He [the Buddha] and other philosophers of the time looked elsewhere for a solution, not primarily in society but in the first place away from it. In effect they contracted out of society in order to preserve their freedom; they abandoned the quest for wealth and power and sought peace of mind and spiritual experiences. Only from an independent vantage point could they hope—as they certainly did hope—to exercise any influence on the society they had left, to infuse into it better ideals than money and violence.[9]

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[6] Warder, *Yindu Fojiao shi*, 38–9.
[7] Warder, *Yindu Fojiao*, 40.
[8] Ibid., 45.
[9] Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 29–30.

At that time in India, there were two types of practitioners, the Brāhmaṇa and the Śramaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa wanted to learn the Vedic classics, the rituals of sacrifice, and the truth of immortality. After completing their studies, they would have a family and retire to the forest in their later years, living a roving life. The Śramaṇa, on the other hand, were a new kind of non-Brahmin practitioner—that is, "people who work hard."[10] They lived a life of begging for food, wandering around, practicing yoga, and pursuing meditation in order to achieve a state beyond life and death. The Buddha belonged to a branch of this new religious ascetic practice. At first, "Buddha" was not the proper name of Śakyamuni Buddha. As in the teachings of Jainism, "Buddha" literally means an "awakened one."[11]

Buddhist Monasticism and Teachings

The Buddha preached the Dharma to his disciples for about forty-nine years. According to Master Yinshun and Hirakawa Akira 平川彰 (1915–2002),[12] this was the period of primitive Buddhism. Original Buddhism came about one hundred years after the Buddha's death, before the Second Buddhist Council and the split of the *saṃgha*. Sectarian Buddhism spanned from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE, roughly five hundred years.[13] Then there were the Mahāyāna, Mahāsāṃghika, and Hīnayāna (called Theravāda) schools, followed by contemporary Buddhism and Humanistic Buddhism, as well as other Buddhism developments in the early years of the Republic of China 中華民國 (1912–1949). In a nutshell, this was Buddhism's development over roughly two thousand six hundred years.

What factors gave rise to sectarian divergence in Buddhism? There are many reasons, such as the dispute over the Ten Precepts and Five Teachings.[14] People thinking differently provoked a split in the monastic community. However, the fundamental reason is that the Buddha, in the beginning, built

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[10]   Hirakawa, *Yindu Fojiao shi*, 2018, 43.
[11]   Ibid., 48.
[12]   Ibid., 68.
[13]   Ibid., 141.
[14]   Horner, *The Book of the Discipline*.

a democratic, free, and autonomous community. The rules of monastic communal life, from the fortnightly *uposatha* to the promulgation of prātimokṣa, were discussed by all members through karma, a form of transparent consensus-based decision making. The Buddha did not attempt to establish strong central management.[15]

We learn about the Buddha's later life in the second book of the *Dīrghāgama*. The Buddha was nearly eighty years old and did not feel well. Since there were no disciples around, he felt obligated to hold on for some time. When Ānanda returned from fetching water and saw that the Buddha was tired, he immediately helped wipe down the Buddha's body. After the Buddha recovered his spirit a little, Ānanda eagerly asked him for a Dharma teaching: "O Buddha! Do you have any teaching for the monastic community? After your death, whom do you think will lead the monastic community? Do you want me to give any explanation or instruction to the community?"[16]

The Buddha responded, "Do the monks need anything from me? Do you need me for the future of the monastic community?" He went on, "I am also a member of the *saṃgha*, and for the past forty-some years, my teachings have been given to every one of you fairly and openly. If any of you think, 'I can preside over the *saṃgha*, and the *saṃgha* is willing to be held by me, and the *saṃgha* should be led by me,' then you should turn to the person. I am just an old man about to die. What do I have to say to you?"[17] The Buddha continued, "O Ānanda! Be kindled by yourself, not by others; be saved by yourself, not by others; be converted into Dharma by yourself, not by others."[18]

The Buddha's *saṃgha* was a democratic, autonomous, and egalitarian organisation. The disciples' subjective interpretations of the Dharma produced

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[15]   Hirakawa, *Yindu Fojiao shi*, 2018, 92.

[16]   *Chang ahan jing*, T 1.1.15a16–26: 是時, 諸比丘受教即行, 佛與阿難獨留。於後夏安居中, 佛身疾生, 舉 [5] 體皆痛, 佛自念言:「我今疾生, 舉身痛甚, 而諸弟子悉皆不在, 若取涅槃, 則非我宜, 今當精勤自力以留壽命。」爾時, 世尊於靜室出, 坐清涼處。阿難見已, 速疾往詣, 而白佛言:「今觀尊顏, 疾如有損。」阿難又言:「世尊有疾, 我心惶懼, 憂結荒迷, 不識方面, 氣息未絕, 猶少醒悟。默思:『如來未即滅度, 世眼未滅, 大法未損, 何故今者不有教令於眾弟子乎?』」

[17]   *Chang ahan jing*, T 1.1.15a26–b2: 佛告阿難:「眾僧於我有所須耶?若有自言:『我持眾僧, 我攝眾僧。』斯人於眾應有教命, 如來不言:『我持於眾, 我攝於眾。』豈當於眾有教令乎?阿難!我所說法, 內外已訖, 終不自稱所見通達。吾已老矣, 年且八十。」

[18]   *Chang ahan jing*, T 1.1.15b5–9: 是故, 阿難!當自熾燃, 熾燃於法, 勿他熾燃;當自歸依, 歸依於法, 勿他歸依。云何自熾燃, 熾燃於法, 勿他熾燃;當自歸依, 歸依於法, 勿他歸依?

twenty sects of Buddhism. The Buddhist *saṃgha* was never a centralised organisation. By comparison, if the Catholic Church wanted to change an established doctrine—such as whether or not to publicly recognise gay marriage—it would need the Pope's decision. Catholics, especially as individuals, cannot publicly state their support or disapproval of the issue.

A Catholic friend of mine in the United States got divorced around age thirty and applied for a divorce certificate from the Church. In the end, the Church gave him a certificate that said "marriage nullification" instead of "divorce." Because he married his ex-wife in the Catholic Church, according to Catholic doctrine he could not be divorced. The process is therefore called nullification instead. I said to him, "You have had eleven children, and still the marriage is nullified?" Unless the Pope changes this doctrine, the church will not allow differences or pluralism of opinion.

The Pope has the final authority to interpret doctrine and the bishops hold administrative authority. The Pope is only the bishop of the Roman Curia, and cannot interfere too much with the administrative functions of the other bishops. The Code of Canon Law is clear: the bishops write a report to the Holy See and Pope every five years. The report is a list of more than thirty items that must be filled out, including the financial reports of the Church and the formation of the faithful and priests. The Pope is not involved in the specific administration of each diocese, but the doctrine must be unified.

So, we might ask, what is the role of the Pope in the Catholic Church? That of the final interpreter and adjudicator of doctrine. The Buddha, by contrast, did not have such authority. Disciples could practice and interpret doctrines according to their own understanding, and the Buddha's monastic order was free in thought. The Buddha did not want his disciples to believe in him but in his Dharma. The Dharma is the objective truth, and he wanted his disciples to believe in the objective truth that he had realised. As stated in *Saṃyuktāgama*:

> Buddha told all bhikkhus that "the law of interdependent arising was not done by me, nor by others. However, whether the Tathāgata is born or not, the Dharma Realm is always inhabited, and the Tathāgata realises this Dharma, attains full enlightenment, and speaks, develops, and displays for all beings. The so-called 'this' exists because there is 'that,' 'this' arises because 'that' arises, it is said that the conditioned ignorance and action,

even the accumulation of pure great suffering, the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of action, and the end of pure great suffering."[19]

It is not just self-interpretation: all living beings are different, and the Buddha's methods are also different. From this point of view, there will inevitably be a variety of sects and forms of mission. However, all schools of Buddhism offer a path to liberation. Regardless of the sect, Buddhism's purpose is to provide the world with a path to liberation.

Buddhism does not have strong internal control, unlike Catholicism. The latter formed strong internal control only after the third century CE, when the Roman Empire declared Christianity legal and Justinian the Great (483–565) declared it the state religion. At that time, the Christian church was heavily influenced by the Roman Empire. In the beginning, much like Buddhism, Christianity did not have much internal control.

The Buddha's Concern for the Human World

The Buddha's teachings covered economics, governance, psychology, and ethics but did not expound his thoughts as fully as did his disciples. In my book *Shan jingji: Jingji de lita sixiang yu shijian* 善經濟：經濟的利他思想與實踐 [The Economy of Goodness: The Philosophy and Practices from the Perspectives of Altruism], I explain the Buddha's views on economics, specifically the Four Sufficiencies (*si juzu* 四具足) and the Six Non-Tao (*liu feidao* 六非道).[20]

> The *Saṃyuktāgama* emphasised Four Sufficiencies:
> The Four Sufficiencies include:
> Expedient Sufficiency (*fangbian juzu* 方便具足) which is commercial professional ability;
> Protective Sufficiency (*shouhu juzu* 守護具足) which is safeguarding property;
> Virtuous Friends Sufficiency (*shan zhishi juzu* 善知識具足) which is ensuring

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[19] *Za ahan jing*, T 99.2.85b24–29: 佛告比丘。緣起法者。非我所作。亦非餘人作。然彼如來出世及未出世。法界常住。彼如來自覺此法。成等正覺。爲諸衆生。分別演說開發顯示。所謂此有故彼有。此起故彼起。謂緣無明行。乃至純大苦聚集。無明滅故行滅。乃至純大苦聚滅。

[20] Her, *Shan jingji*.

joyful life with all people;

Right Livelihood Sufficiency (*zheng ming juzu* 正命具足) which is living a virtuous and meaningful life.[21]

These Four Sufficiencies cover all the ways to wealth and happiness for the Economy of Goodness (*shan jingji* 善經濟) and Enterprises of Goodness (*shan qiye* 善企業).

Economic activities require various professional skills and expertise. To master all ways to benefit all living beings is to have Expedient Sufficiency. The Protection Sufficiency means that one must start with a moral life to protect economic gains in business. By Virtuous Friends Sufficiency, the Buddha encouraged people to not only get close to virtuous friends but also to be virtuous friends for others. Only when we can help others achieve their life and career goals can we be virtuous people ourselves. We should not only help others profit but also inspire goodness in them. Only when our employees, partners, and consumers obtain wisdom from our products can Virtuous Friends Sufficiency and Economy of Goodness be realised. The economic activities that one engages in should benefit both oneself and others' wealth and quality of life. This is called Right Livelihood Sufficiency.

The Buddha also spoke of what we might call the Six Non-Tao[22] in business and a Four-Part Wealth Management strategy (*si fen licai* 四分理財),[23]

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[21]   *Za ahan jing*, T 99.2.23a25–23b22: 佛告婆羅門:「有四法, 俗人在家得現法安、現法樂。何等為四? 謂方便具足、守護具足、善知識具足、正命具足。

「何等為方便具足?謂善男子種種工巧業處以自營生, 謂種田、商賈, 或以王事, 或以書疏算畫。於彼彼工巧業處精勤修行, 是名方便具足。

「何等為守護具足?謂善男子所有錢穀, 方便所得, 自手執作, 如法而得, 能極守護, 不令王、賊、水、火劫奪漂沒令失, 不善守護者亡失, 不愛念者輒取, 及諸災患所壞, 是名善男子善守護。

「何等為善知識具足?若有善男子不落度、不放逸、不虛妄、不凶險, 如是知識能善安慰, 未生憂苦能令不生, 已生憂苦能令開覺, 未生喜樂能令速生, 已生喜樂護令不失, 是名善男子善知識具足。

「云何為正命具足?謂善男子所有錢財出內稱量, 周圓掌護, 不令多入少出也、多出少入也。如執秤者, 少則增之, 多則減之, 知平而捨。如是, 善男子稱量財物, 等入等出, 莫令入多出少、出多入少, 若善男子無有錢財而廣散用, 以此生活, 人皆名為優曇鉢果, 無有種子, 愚癡貪欲, 不顧其後。或有善男子財物豐多, 不能食用, 傍人皆言是愚癡人如餓死狗。是故, 善男子所有錢財能自稱量, 等入等出, 是名正命具足。如是, 婆羅門! 四法成就, 現法安、現法樂。」

[22]   *Zhong ahan jing*, T 26.1.639b18–23: 居士子!求財物者, 當知有六非道。云何為六?一曰種種戲求財物者為非道。二曰非時行求財物者為非道。三曰飲酒放逸求財物者為非道。四曰親近惡知識求財物者為非道。五曰常喜妓樂求財物者為非道。六曰懶惰求財物者為非道。

which includes dedicating two parts of personal wealth to producing interest, one part to family use, and one part to alleviating poverty in the world. This teaching holds that, for businessmen, the first thing to do in business is to have Expedient Sufficiency, that is, to be skilful and professional.

The Buddha was an eloquent philosopher, and wherever he travelled, he gave talks on various topics to both the wise and to people at large. However, in the history of Buddhism, Buddhist ideas on economics, political science, and so on were less well known. More recently, however, a Western economist, Clair Brown of Berkeley University, wrote *Buddhist Economics: An Enlightened Approach to the Dismal Science*.[24] Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, a German economic philosopher, also advocated the economic principle that "small is beautiful." From a Buddhist perspective, Schumacher's views of the shortcomings of the contemporary capitalist economy resonate with the Eightfold Path and the Four Immeasurable Minds.[25]

Over the last two thousand years of Buddhist history, the Buddha's thoughts on politics, law, art, and business have often been overlooked. The bodhisattva imperative to improve the world gained influence in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which, however, still focused on the giving of Dharma to relieve worldly suffering and lacked an overall construction of worldly knowledge and value systems. This may lead us to ask, why did the teachings of the Buddha, who valued the human world, move toward mindfulness and self-cultivation in Sectarian Buddhism, while overlooking the importance of worldly affairs? Why was a system of knowledge and values that could guide the mundane world not established?

We can trace this issue to the pre-sectarian disciples' preferences, specifically related to doctrinal issues and views on the transmission of the Dharma after the Buddha's death. In his book *Weishixue tanyuan* 唯識學探源 [The Origin of the Theory of Consciousness-Only],[26] Master Yinshun said that Original Buddhism emphasised the teaching of the Dharma instead of material giving. That means it emphasised the giving of Dharma rather than worldly material

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[23]   *Za ahan jing*, T 99.2.353a21–b2:「如是我聞：一時, 佛住舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。時, 有天子容色絕妙, 於後夜時來詣佛所, 稽首佛足, 其身光明遍照祇樹給孤獨園。時, 彼天子說偈問佛：『云何人所作, 智慧以求財, 等攝受於財, 若勝若復劣?』爾時, 世尊說偈答言：『始學功巧業, 方便集財物, 得彼財物已, 當應作四分, 一分自食用, 二分營生業, 餘一分藏密, 以擬於貧乏。』」

[24]   Brown, *Buddhist Economics*.

[25]   Schumacher, *Small is beautiful*.

[26]   Yinshun, *Weishixue tanyuan*, 34.

gratifications. Original Buddhism did not have a rigorous organization of monks, a system of knowledge for constructing the world, nor a system of ethics for lay people to follow. Providing the way to liberation from the world was the fundamental teaching of Original Buddhism.

According to Theravāda history, the early organisation of Buddhist followers consisted of the seven disciples of the Buddha, including the Lonely Elder (Skt. Anāthapiṇḍada, Ch. Jigudu Zhangzhe 給孤獨長者), along with about five hundred other followers. However, there are insufficient records of the organisation and no strict rituals for lay followers.[27] Monastics had the fortnightly *uposadha* of the *saṃgha* and more than two hundred precepts for bhikkhus and five hundred precepts for bhikkhunis. However, the Five Precepts (Skt. *pañcaśīla*) aside, there was no strict code of conduct for lay followers of Buddhism like there were for the Brāhmaṇa.

The Ideal of Lay Followers in Early Buddhism

What did the Buddha expect of lay followers? We know that the Buddha expected monks to be uncontaminated arhats (Skt. *asamskrtārhat*, Ch. *wulou aluohan* 無漏阿羅漢), and the Mahāyāna classics expect arhats to attain ultimate enlightenment and Buddhahood through the bodhisattva path. But what about the cultivation of lay followers?

Let us consider the most powerful disciple of the Buddha, the Lonely Elder, as an example. He bought a garden in the capital city of Śrāvastī in the kingdom of Kośala for the Buddha and his disciples to live in. The garden was spacious and exquisite. It is recorded in the Buddhist scriptures that this garden had pavement made of gold. The Buddha and his disciples spent a considerable amount of time here giving sermons during the summer. While giving to the Brāhmaṇa was considered a great blessing, this notion was not necessarily emphasised at the time of the Buddha. However, Buddhist monks still believed in the concept of giving alms to gain merit. Rather than following the elaborate rules of life as written in scriptures, lay followers practiced alms giving, good deeds, and the Five Precepts.[28]

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[27]   Warder, *Yindu Fojiao shi*, 265–66.

[28]   The *Chang ahan jing's* (Skt. *Dīrghāgama*; The Long Discourses) volume 10 contains the

The Buddha's teachings to the Lonely Elder revolve around the concepts and practices of giving, holding precepts, and the heavenly realm. The concept of blessing in particular seems to be central in the Buddha's teachings to lay followers; by benefiting the community and providing for the monks, lay followers may ascend to heaven. Indeed, it is recorded in the *Saṃyuktāgama* that after his death, the Lonely Elder's glowing body descended from the Tuṣita Heaven to meet the Buddha.[29] There are two different accounts in Buddhist texts about the cultivation of the Lonely Elder. One is his ascension to Tuṣita Heaven. The other is his attainment of the Non-Returner Stage—the third order of arhatship—according to which the Elder would be an uncontaminated arhat upon his next return to the human world, and then would transcend the cycle of birth and death.

I suggest what the Buddha expected of lay followers is to pursue the path of liberation, rather than the pursuit of worldly attainment. In the *Saṃyuktāgama*, the Buddha was carrying an alms bowl to the city of Śrāvastī and happened to arrive at the home of the Lonely Elder, who was seriously ill, but still paid homage to the Buddha and wanted to provide for him. The Buddha accepted the offerings in silence. The Buddha showed that the way to be free from suffering is through endurance and by keeping the holy precepts. The Buddha granted the Lonely Elder Stage of the Non-Returner.[30]

This ideal—the Lonely Elder who still paid homage to the Buddha despite being seriously ill—is the highest ideal of lay follower practice, as recorded in the Theravāda *Madhyamāgama*. The Buddha asked Shariputra and Ānanda to visit the Lonely Elder. Shariputra preached to him that the way to enlighten-

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section on the "Five Precepts": "Not to kill, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to lie, and not to consume intoxicants" (五戒：不殺、不盜、不婬、不欺、不飲酒), T 1.1.59c13–14.

[29]　*Za ahan jing*, T 99.2.158b25–c1: 時, 給孤獨長者疾病命終, 生兜率天, 為兜率天子, 作是念：「我不應久住於此, 當往見世尊。」作是念已, 如力士屈申臂頃, 於兜率天沒, 現於佛前, 稽首佛足, 退坐一面。時, 給孤獨天子身放光明, 遍照祇樹給孤獨園。

[30]　*Za ahan jing*, T 99.2.269b1–18: 如是我聞：一時, 佛住舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。爾時, 給孤獨長者得病, 身極苦痛。世尊聞已, 晨朝著衣持鉢, 入舍衛城乞食, 次第乞食至給孤獨長者舍。長者遙見世尊, 馮床欲起。世尊見已, 即告之言：「長者勿起! 增其苦患.」世尊即坐, 告長者言：「云何? 長者, 病可忍不? 身所苦患, 為增、為損?」長者白佛：「甚苦! 世尊! 難可堪忍……」乃至說三受, 如差摩修多羅廣說, 乃至「苦受但增不損。」佛告長者：「當如是學：『於佛不壞淨, 於法、僧不壞淨, 聖戒成就。』」長者白佛：「如世尊說四不壞淨, 我有此法, 此法中有我。世尊! 我今於佛不壞淨, 法、僧不壞淨, 聖戒成就。」佛告長者：「善哉! 善哉!」即記長者得阿那含果。長者白佛：「唯願世尊今於此食。」爾時, 世尊默而許之。長者即勅辦種種淨美飲食, 供養世尊。世尊食已, 為長者種種說法, 示、教、照、喜已, 從坐起而去。

ment is to be free from suffering; that the Five Aggregates (Skt. skandhas) are all empty; that one should not be attached to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind; that one must be beyond this world and be free from attachment to the next world, and that one should be free from the thought of nothingness.[31] Thus, the Buddha's expectation of the Lonely Elder was that he would be free from the suffering of this world and attain wisdom and liberation. The Buddha said in the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Meanings* (Skt. *Ananta Nirdeśa Sūtra*, Ch. *Wuliang yi jing* 無量義經) that as suffering is removed, the Dharma will be taught (*ku ji bayi, fu wei shuofa* 苦既拔已, 復為說法).[32] It seems that the Buddha's intention in the Mahāyāna classics is to remove material pains before teaching the Dharma. But did early Buddhism lack such an idea of removing worldly suffering?

Aśoka's Buddhist Kingdom

Aśoka (304–232 BCE) was the third king of the Maurya Empire, the original Buddhist period before the development of Sectarian Buddhism. Did Aśoka's kingdom give rise to the popularisation of Buddhism? What was the state of Buddhism created by Aśoka? Let us briefly describe the situation of Aśoka's Buddhist kingdom.

Aśoka built tens of thousands of stūpas during his reign to enshrine the Buddha's relics and divided the relics of the eight kings, who built their own stūpas, into 84,000 stūpas throughout then-India. This was a time when stūpa construction was in its prime. We should note that at that time, there were stūpas but few statues. It was only in the first century BCE that Buddha statues began to appear. When the Greeks captured northern India in the first century

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[31]　*Jiaogei gudu jing*, in *Zhongbu jingdian*, N 5.12.272a07–274a05: 一時, 世尊住舍衛城祇陀林給孤獨園。其時, 恰給孤獨長者患病痛苦而激惱。……至已, 敬禮尊者舍利弗坐於一面。坐於一面之士夫如是言尊者舍利弗:「尊者!給孤獨長者患病痛苦而激惱, 彼頭面禮尊者舍利弗之足且如是言:『善哉!尊者舍利弗來給孤獨長者之處, 以垂慈愍!』」尊者舍利弗默然而許諾。時, 尊者舍利弗著衣執鉢、衣, 尊者阿難為後侍, 而至彼給孤獨長者之處。……〔舍利弗曰:〕是故, 長者!汝應如是學:『我不執受眼識。又於我, 眼識為所依之識亦不存在。』長者!汝實應如是學:『我不執受耳識……乃至……我不執受鼻識……乃至……我不執受舌識……乃至……我不執受身識……乃至……我不執受意識。又於我, 意識為所依之識, 亦不存在。』長者!汝實應如是學。

[32]　*Wuliang yi jing*, T 276.9.385c28.

BCE, they introduced the art of Buddha statues, including their flesh buns, which were a feature of the iconography of Greek gods. Scholars suggest that the hair bun of the Buddha may have been replicating the Greek statues.[33]

Aśoka waged numerous wars in his early reign. After converting to Buddhism, he imposed a ban on killing in the court and kitchens, and adopted a vegetarian diet. For prisoners on death row, he introduced three days of repentance before execution. Aśoka prohibited killing and promoted peace in general. He taught his people the importance of honesty and filial piety, and encouraged lay people to engage in short periods of self-cultivation in temples. Aśoka himself also spent short periods of time in temples. He was a strong and domineering king; though he fought many battles in the past he changed once he became a follower of Buddhism.

Aśoka's pacifism contributed to the abolition of the death penalty and to the end of war in small northern kingdoms. During this lifetime, he sent many monks to what is now known as the island of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand to preach Buddhism. Aśoka even promulgated the Dharma through his carved stone pillars throughout India. Dharma is an abstract principle that promotes tolerance between communities and religions. It is is not a cumbersome law but rather a life philosophy that incorporates Buddhist ideas. Buddhist temples also flourished under Aśoka. The state system followed the guidance of the Dharma, but Aśoka failed to establish a secular system of Buddhist followers. As a result, Buddhism failed to replace Brahminism. After Aśoka, Buddhism became less involved in the sphere of daily life than Brahminism, which mastered the practical aspects of life. In his later years, Aśoka was betrayed by his ministers and princes. After his death, his sons abandoned Buddhism and India returned to Brahminism. Soon the Maurya Empire fell.

Weber's study points out that between the lifetime of the Buddha and the advent of Mahāyāna Buddhism, a rigorous community of lay followers was not established, nor was the spirit of Buddhism integrated into mundane life. There also lacked a rigorous ethical system of life. Even after Aśoka converted to Buddhism, he still honoured the Brāhmaṇa and provided them with a great deal of alms. Although Buddhism influenced the royal court, social rituals and ceremonies were still in the hands of the Brāhmaṇa.[34] Buddhism provided a

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[33]   Sun and He, *Tu shuo Jiantuoluo wenming*, 16.
[34]   Durant, *Shijie wenming shi—Yindu yu Nan Ya*, 135.

path to worldly liberation, but its lack of a comprehensive system of knowledge about the realities of the world left the Brāhmaṇa with a firm grip on the realm of social life.

In the ninth century BCE, before the birth of the Buddha, a group of Brahmin thinkers and poets reinterpreted the classical Vedic texts and made innovations in their exposition. The Vedas were a collection of Brahmin knowledge. They are not a single classic but a collection of classics compiled by monks of various sects that includes epic poetry, science, logic, astronomy, economy, architecture, and art, forming a huge system of knowledge for the Brāhmaṇa, and involving many social aspects. As a result, Brahminism became a religion, a culture, and a way of life.

By the ninth century BCE, the Brāhmaṇa world-oriented knowledge system was already complete. The Upaniṣads and the Vedas covered not only metaphysical philosophy but also yoga, spirituality, mantra, and other skills. Indeed, the five traditional fields of Buddhist knowledge were inspired by the Indian Brāhmaṇa: "Buddhist Logic" for logic and dialectics; "Inner Studies," for philosophy and doctrine; "Buddhist Linguistics"; "Buddhist Medicine," for medicine and pharmacology; and "Buddhist Workmanship," for agriculture, arts, crafts, and science. The vast system of knowledge and values enabled by the Brāhmaṇa was constructed four centuries before the birth of the Buddha.

Brāhmaṇa not only dominated the secular knowledge of various professions, but Brahmin law also permeated society. The code of ethics established by the Brāhmaṇa in the eleventh century BCE, commonly known as the *Law of Manu* (*Manusmṛiti*), has more than two thousand and eight hundred articles governing social lifestyle and ethics. The code of ethics took root in the core of Indian society and became a fundamental part of people's lives and culture. Even Aśoka's policy of promoting Buddhism could not shake it. This code of ethics remained embedded in Indian culture throughout the period of Buddhism's flourishing, Muslim rule, and the Mongolian empire.

Thus, during Aśoka's time, the primary level of focus was Buddhism, but the techniques and norms of everyday life were dominated by Brahminism. Even though Buddhism prevailed, the caste system never disappeared in India: the Brāhmaṇa were the priests; the Kṣatriyas were the warriors and the royal family; the Vaishyas were the professionals and merchants, including those who engage in agriculture; and finally, the Shudras were the lowest class of workers. In this way, Buddhism deepened its dependence on the Brāhmaṇa,

including on their Vedic arts, spirituality, and expertise. During the early Buddhist period, the Buddha was revered but the kings of Pāṭaliputra still believed in the Brāhmaṇa as their teachers. Kings worshipped the Buddha on one hand, and gods from the pantheon of Brahminism, like Brahma and Indra, on the other. India pursued Buddhism spiritually while living Brahminism in day-to-day life.

The Characteristics of Sectarian Buddhism

The core figure in Sectarian Buddhism is the pratyekabuddha, who achieves solitary liberation. Akira Hirakawa thinks that Sectarian Buddhism is the Buddhism of disciples and learning, and not the Buddhism of teaching people.[35] The sectarian Buddhist teachings are characterised by devotionalism, in which monks strictly observe the precepts, pray for liberation, and do not pursue real-world improvement. Monks practiced in vast temple gardens, abstaining from sex, and seeking liberation. The king and merchants gave significant support to the monks so they could concentrate on their practice without any worries.

Buddhism provided a stabilising force for merchants travelling from country to country, who faced various dangerous challenges. From the perspective of planting good roots to obtain good results, by giving alms and making offerings to monks, the merchants believed they gained blessings. Compared to the Brāhmaṇa emphasis on ritual and prayer, Buddhism's rational thinking and practice gave merchants the courage and calm wisdom they needed to go through dangers and hardships. In addition, the caste system of the Brāhmaṇa was not suitable for commercial relations with foreigners, as the merchants came into contact with various ethnic groups and classes. Buddhism, with its emphasis on equality, became the faith to which the merchant class adhered. By contrast, the peasants followed Brahminism closely.[36]

Although kings and wealthy merchants believed in Buddhism, Sectarian Buddhism devoted much of its energy not to establishing a new order for the world and a new set of laws for lay people, but to debating the sūtras in the monasteries. Over twenty different sectarian systems reinterpreted the Bud-

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[35]   Hirakawa, *Yindu Fojiao shi*, trans. Jhuang Kun Mu, 2012, 107.
[36]   Ibid.

dha's teachings according to their own understanding and practice, and all of them insisted that they were most in line with the original teachings of the Buddha. It was a prevalent belief, both then and through later generations, that the Abhidharma focused on the correct interpretation and understanding of scriptures. As A. K. Warder states: "The Buddha insisted that his teaching must be tested by practice and that his systematic teaching should be consistent with objective facts and universal laws of nature. Abhidhamma, on the other hand, ignored the importance of objective experience and focused on the correct interpretation of the scriptures and their most accurate reproduction."[37]

The elaborate interpretation and debate over the scriptures became the central interest of Sectarian Buddhism. The construction of a broader world-oriented knowledge system for lay followers was lost, and the focus was on scriptural debates within the monasteries. In contrast to Buddhism, the 2,685-article code of ethics, *The Law of Manu*, written by the Brāhmaṇa in 1200 BCE was not replaced by the Buddhist doctrine. The Code is not a law, but a principle and ethic of class and profession. As Will Durant states: "No code of laws applied to all India. In the ordinary affairs of life the place of law was taken by the dharma-shastras-metrical textbooks of caste regulations and duties, composed by the Brahmans from a strictly Brahman point of view. The oldest of these is the so-called 'Code of Manu'."[38]

These norms of ethical order for all classes were entrenched at all levels of society. Brahminism was not an organisation but a social system. The rise of Buddhism did not provide an ethical code of life, nor herald the disappearance of the Brahmin class order. The Brahmin clergy, numbering about eight million at the time, derived its power from the transmission of exclusive knowledge. They were the custodians and rulers of traditional culture, the priests of sacrifice, the writers, and the experts on the Vedic classics.[39] The rise of Buddhism under Aśoka weakened the power of Brahminism temporarily. However, as long as the "class order" and "ethical norms" remained in place and were still in the hands of the Brāhmaṇa, Buddhism, as an avant-garde idea, failed to permeate the daily life of lay people and to establish a new ethic, let alone construct a new social system.

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[37]   Warder, *Yindu Fojiao shi*, 419.
[38]   Durant and Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, 483, 484.
[39]   Ibid., 485.

The efforts of the Brāhmaṇa finally regained power in the Gupta Empire (ca. 320–550 CE), and Brahminism and Buddhism were evenly favoured by the royal family. Numerous documents from the second century CE show that the royal family donated large tracts of land to the Brāhmaṇa, and all Brahmin products were tax-free.[40] After the seventh century CE, the Brāhmaṇa gradually revived and eventually brought Buddhism to its end.

The Worldly Concern of Mahāyāna Buddhism

If Mahāyāna Buddhism[41] is a bodhisattva path that engages with the world, why did it eventually die out in India after about nine hundred years of development? In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the bodhisattva replaced pratyekabuddha as the object of worship. The Buddha took on a human form and the bodhisattva took on various forms to save and enlighten sentient beings, which meant "giving the Dharma" and providing practitioners with a path to liberation from the world.

But what was Mahāyāna Buddhism's view of lay practice? In the early days of Sectarian Buddhism, virtuous *upāsaka* and *upāsikā* were highly respected by the monastic community. They could report monks' precept violations to maintain the purity of the monastic community. The monks took the testimony of *upāsikā* to cross-examine and punish the erring bhikkhus.[42] As Master Yinshun said: "the *saṃgha* can be assisted by lay followers to maintain the purity of the *saṃgha*."[43] He also said: "Trustworthy *upāsikā* see the Four Noble True Truths and do not lie for themselves, for others, or profit. They are the holy ones who see the truth."[44] Theravāda stresses the superiority of monks, and asserts that the affairs of the *saṃgha* have nothing to do with lay disciples. The Mahāsāṃghika have a different opinion, as stated in the *Great Canon of Monastic Rules* (Skt. *Mahāsaṃghikavinaya*; Ch. *Mohesengzhi lü* 摩訶僧祇律):

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40   Durant and Durant, Our Oriental Heritage, 484.
41   It is generally accepted that Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged before Nāgārjuna (ca. 150 to 250 CE).
42   Yinshun, *Dacheng qixinlun jiangji*, 188, 189.
43   Ibid., 188.
44   Ibid., 189.

> You should ask the monks of great virtue to resolve this matter together. If there are no monks of great virtue, you should ask for the monks who have abundant wisdom. If there are no monks who convey abound wisdom, you should ask for the monks who dwell in a forest (Skt. *araṇya*). If there are no monks in *araṇya*, you should ask for the great power of *upāsaka*; when a monk sees *upāsaka*, he feels ashamed in his heart, and his accusations are also eliminated. If there is no such *upāsaka*, he should ask the king if the minister has power. When he sees this power, he feels awe in his heart, and disputes are easily destroyed.[45]

It is said that Moggaliputtatissa had to turn to Aśoka to solve the disputes of the monastic community, which is recorded in the *Great Canon of Monastic Rules*. In the early days, the lay community and the monks lived in harmony. If a monk offended a lay follower by violating reasonable ethics, he even had to go to the follower's house to apologise, which was called "Happy Karma" (*faxi jiemo* 發喜羯磨).[46] However, over time, with the repeated emphasis on the superiority of monks, the harmonious relationship between monks and lay followers in primitive Buddhism gradually disappeared.[47]

As early as in the Uttrapathaka, there were lay arhats, meaning that lay followers could also attain arhatship like monks. For example, Yasa, Utika, and Setu, a young Brahmin, were all lay followers and attained arhatship.[48] With the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, moreover, bodhisattvas replaced śrāvakas and it became common for bodhisattvas to appear outside monasteries. As Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished, lay followers also collaborated in compiling Buddhist texts.

In the early years of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India, noblewomen and the upper class supported Buddhism, and many noblewomen, in particular, supported Mahāyāna Buddhist monks. Weber compares this situation to that of the thirteenth century in Rome when the noble class supported Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/82–1226), who came from a wealthy family and later aspired

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[45] *Mohe sengqi lü*, T 1425.22.328a4–13: 當求大德比丘共滅此事。若無大德比丘者, 當求多聞比丘；若無多聞者, 當求阿練若比丘；若無阿練若比丘者, 當求大勢力優婆塞。彼諍比丘見優婆塞, 心生慚愧, 諍事亦滅。若復無此優婆塞者, 當求於王、若大臣有勢力者。彼諍比丘見此豪勢, 心生敬畏, 諍事易滅。

[46] Yinshun, *Dacheng qixinlun jiangji*, 189.

[47] *Chuqi dacheng Fojiao zhi qiyuan yu kaizhan*, Y 0035.37.189a09–a10: 自出家優越性的一再強化, 原始佛教那種四眾融和的精神, 漸漸的消失了！

[48] Yinshun, *Dacheng qixinlun jiangji*, 185.

to become a priest. It is said that he walked out of his house naked without any possessions in order to break off his worldly ties with his rich father. Saint Francis lived a life of poverty and wore a coarse brown cassock. Although all Franciscan priests had to live in poverty, the Franciscans later became quite rich, since women of the upper class gave them money out of concern that they would live too poorly.[49] The advice of Saint Francis to the Franciscan priests was: "When we catch a glimpse of someone more shabby than we are, we are thieves if we do not give him the clothes we have on."[50]

Saint Francis' belief in poverty led him to attract many priests to the Franciscan order. Born in 1182, Saint Francis had about five thousand priests at the time of his death, all of whom willingly led a life of poverty. By 1280, the Franciscans had two hundred thousand priests living in eight thousand monasteries. They became great preachers, and many saints appeared among them, such as Saint Bernardino (1380–1444) and Saint Anthony (1195–1231). However, over time, the faithful donated in great numbers, and the priests began to be extravagant, building large churches in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi despite his prohibition of building such luxurious churches.[51]

In the early days of Mahāyāna Buddhism, there was widespread support for Buddhist monks, just like the support from upper-class Catholic noblewomen in the Franciscan era. However, because of this, the monks who originally settled into a property-free life grew dependent on the affluent classes. They became less willing to leave the mundane world. In other words, the large number of offerings made the monks who were otherwise outside the world slowly enter secular society.[52] However, in entering secular society, the monks did not build a secular value system based on Buddhism. The secularised monks became dependent on worldly wealth, instead of providing a code of conduct and a system of knowledge, values, and organisation for the worldly society.

My point is that in Mahāyāna Buddhism the power of the king was combined with the power of the monks, but this did not necessarily bring the popularisation of the Buddhist Dharma. Instead, it brought an institutionalization of Buddhism and the formation of the authority, class, and regime of Buddhist

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49   Weber, *Yindu de zongjiao*, 393–94.

50   Durant, *Shijie wenming shi—Jidujiao dianfeng de wenming*, 110.

51   Durant and Durant, *The Age of Faith*, 792, 793.

52   Weber, *Yindu de zongjiao*, 393.

monks. Weber's study points out that the kings effectively tamed society at large through monks and Buddhism. On the mundane level, Buddhism assisted with establishing secular power and dominating the lives of the people. The people worshiped monks, both for their practice and for the magical power they possessed.[53] The ruler relied on monks for ruling rather than allowing the spirit of the monk to prevail in the life of the masses. That is why I suggest this period resulted in the formation of Buddhism's authority, class, and regime, rather than in the universalisation of Buddhist teachings.

The Age of Buddhism alongside Brahminism

At that time, Brahminism and Buddhism were juxtaposed in India, and statues of Brahma, Indra, and the Buddha were displayed side by side on the banks of the Ganges River. Around the seventh century CE, when a great Chinese monk, Master Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 602–664), went to India to obtain scriptures, he described India as a Brahmin country. At that time, the king of Kośala worshipped the Buddha as well as the gods of Brahminism. Why did Buddhism later die out in India? Although the upper social class practiced Buddhism, social life was in the hands of the Brāhmaṇa, who developed their professional systems.

Moreover, as far as the upper-class intellectuals were concerned, the Buddha did not stress discernment. In the *Śūraṃgama Sūtra,* the Buddha was asked many questions and the Buddha asked a thousand questions in return. These were about how to release doubt and overthinking, and to adopt non-austerity and a middle path in the moral practice of daily life. Yet, in Buddhism's later developments, the intellectuals of the upper classes in India were fond of reason-based thinking, for which Brahminism provided a philosophical foundation. Weber thought that the study of Brahmin Vedic thought was an unparalleled tool for intellectuals to gain a firm grasp of spirituality, and to obtain persuasive theories for arguing with opponents. The intellectuals of the time were so interested in the pursuit of the Five Fields of Knowledge that even those who had their mind set on Buddhism still had to learn the language of Brahminism.[54]

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[53]   Weber, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, 421.

[54]   Weber, *Yindu de zongjiao*, 394.

The kings, including those of the city of Pāṭaliputra, revered the Buddha's teachings but still honoured the Brahmin texts as their teachers. The juxtaposition of Buddhism and Brahminism was becoming increasingly distinct in Mahāyāna Buddhism. In addition to worshipping the Buddha, the kings of Kośala also worshipped Hindu gods at Brahmin shrines. At this time, Buddhism was declining from its juxtaposition with Brahminism.[55] In the later years of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Buddhist monks focused on the theory of Consciousness-Only (Skt. *Vijñānavāda*), a deeper understanding of the nature of the mind. This profound system of meditation was not accessible to common people. I consider this a superior Buddhist direction for high-level monks to dive into the study of consciousness, rather than a worldly system of knowledge and values. In *The Origin of the Theory of Consciousness-Only*, Master Yinshun said Buddhist monks did not place much value on the improvement of the material world.[56] This development made Buddhism gradually move away from the lives of the masses.

At the grassroots level, people did not have access to the Buddhist ethical systems at a secular level, so they moved towards the mystic arts and the various mantras and tantras of the Brahmin. In *Yindu fojiao sixiang shi* 印度佛教思想史 [The History of Indian Buddhist Thought], Master Yinshun said:

> In Mahāyāna Buddhism (and Sectarian Buddhism), mystical Buddhism grew and finally became "Esoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism," which became widely popular and mainstream in late Indian Buddhism. Therefore, the development of "Esoteric Mahāyāna" should be understood in the context of the relationship between Mahāyāna and its environment. Esoteric Buddhism, whether it is profound, degenerate, or "being reclusive and seeking something bizarre," is undoubtedly the mainstream of late Buddhism and should not be disregarded because of its mysteriousness.[57]

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[55]   Weber, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, 339.

[56]   Yinshun, *Weishixue tanyuan*.

[57]   Yinshun, *Yindu Fojiao sixiang shi*, 385. 在『大乘佛法』(及部派佛法)流行中, 秘密化的佛法, 潛滋暗長, 終於成為『秘密大乘佛法』, 廣大流行, 為印度後期佛教的主流。發展, 應有適宜於發展的環境, 自身(大乘)也應有發展的可能, 所以『秘密大乘』的發展, 應從大乘與環境關係中去理解。秘密化的佛教, 不論說是高深的, 墮落的, 或者說『索隱行怪』, 但無疑是晚期佛教的主流, 是不能以秘密而忽視的。

In the beginning, the Buddha tried to overthrow the mysticism and deification in Brahminism with rationalism and moral practice. However, later, the worship of holy relics, the use of holy water, incense and candles, rosaries, vestments, mantras for prayers, fasting, the initiation of saints, relics of saints, and purification and chanting for the dead were all adopted by the faithful, and the rituals and mysticism of Buddhism and Brahminism merged. All of this had been an ancient Indian tradition, and after the Buddha's death more than a thousand years later, it returned to the mainstream of society. Commenting on the merging of Buddhism and Hinduism, Will and Ariel Durant said:

> Buddha, like Luther, had made the mistake of supposing that the drama of religious ritual could be replaced with sermons and morality; and the victory of a Buddhism rich in myths, miracles, ceremonies and intermediating saints corresponds to the ancient and current triumph of a colorful and dramatic Catholicism over the austere simplicity of early Christianity and modern Protestantism.[58]

As a result of encountering the knowledge, mysteries, and incantations of Brahminism, Mahāyāna Buddhism's teachings became infiltrated by Brahminism. The intellectuals' thirst returned to Brahmin thinking based on reason; monks specialised in the theory of Consciousness-Only and moved towards a more profound philosophy of mind instead of popularising Buddhism; and the common people looked to Hinduism's mysteries and incantations. Weber and Master Yinshun argue that, for these reasons, Buddhism died out by the thirteenth century.

The Demise of Buddhism in India

The final blow to Buddhism was the Muslim invasion of India. Before the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206, there were three major Muslim invasions in India. In the thirteenth century, the Sultans massacred Buddhist monks, destroyed Buddhist monasteries, and burned libraries. Beginning in the tenth century CE, temples, gold, silver, and jewellery in India were plundered

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[58]   Durant and Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, 504.

by the Turks, Afghans, and Mongolians. Muslim invasions during this time resulted in significant casualties. Maḥmūd of Ghaznī (971–1030) occupied Delhi and slaughtered hundreds of thousands of people, and tens of thousands of young women and children were made slaves. According to the records, Maḥmūd of Ghaznī did not hesitate to order the burning of a temple that cost India one hundred million gold coins and two hundred years of labour. The soldiers burned it to ashes with paraffin oil.[59]

Islamic invaders in India not only plundered but also rationalised and sanctified the destruction with religion. As King Tamerlane (1336–1405) told his soldiers before the war, citing the Koran: "Oh Prophet, make war upon infidels and unbelievers, and treat them with severity."[60] Buddhists had difficulty responding to such brutal military force. On the one hand, Buddhist pacifism weakened the will of the people to fight. Buddhism had spread among non-believers in the past, with the Kushans being one example. Buddhism taught these invading forces to abandon their military power. However, unlike the Kushans, the invading Muslims had their own religion, which made it a virtue to punish the infidels in jihad and share plundered goods with brothers.[61]

This period saw large numbers of Buddhist casualties. Buddhist monks with shaved heads were easy to identify, while Brāhmaṇa looked like lay people. A. K. Warder believes that Hinduism was more resilient than Buddhism, and Hindu warriors were always ready to fight, which was their duty. Anyone who died in battle would ascend to heaven. Hinduism thus remained active in areas occupied by Islam. Hindus continued their faith, while sustaining their will to fight, with dialects, vernacular languages, and popular literature. Until the sixteenth century CE, most Indians were Hindus.[62]

In the eighth century CE, Brahminism was transformed into Hinduism through reforms by Shankara (700?–750?), a religious reformer and philosopher.[63] The Vedic ideas of Shankara and Kumārila were widely transmitted throughout Indian society in the form of literature, and shaped the ideological foundation of the Hindu people. In addition to these two philosophers, both

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[59] Ibid., 460.
[60] Ibid., 463.
[61] Warder, *Yindu fojiao shi*, 228.
[62] Ibid., 232.
[63] Lin, *Yindu tongshi*, 2280.

the Vishnu and the Shiva sects inherited the ancient Indian Vedic traditions of Puranic religion. These diverse manifestations of Hinduism surpassed the influence of Buddhism by the twelfth century CE. Conversely, as A. K. Warder noted, Buddhism in this period was excessively philosophical and could indeed be described as a collegiate tradition. The teachings were mostly circulated in universities rather than among the people.[64]

During the Islamic invasion of India and the transition from Brahminism to Hinduism, the social system did not disintegrate, and the social ethics that had been passed down for thousands of years still stood. Indian cultural identity was supported by epic folk heroism in the form of literature that depicts fighting aggression and brutality in pursuit of justice. Even Turkish-ruled North India did not assimilate Hindus into Islam.[65] Whereas Buddhism was extinguished by the Islamic regime with a final blow, as Will Durant commented, Hinduism obliterated Buddhism with a brotherly embrace.[66]

Brahminism subsumed Buddhism into Hinduism by declaring the Buddha an incarnation of Vishnu. The ancient orthodox religion accepted the return of Buddhism, which had previously been Hindu heresy. The tolerant Brāhmaṇa stopped sacrificing and incorporated the Buddhist ideas of equality of all beings and non-killing into the Hindu orthodox rituals. Buddhism in India became history.[67] In sum, Indian Buddhism never established an ethic of secular life, a socialised system of knowledge, or an organisational system of lay followers. It lacked a connection to secular life and failed to establish real-world knowledge and value systems. In my view, this is the main reason why Buddhism declined in India.

The historical innovation of Tzu Chi Buddhism lies in its establishment of the ideals of "living Buddhism" (*fofa shenghuo hua* 佛法生活化) and "humanising the bodhisattva" (*pusa renjian hua* 菩薩人間化). The Tzu Chi community, through the Tzu Chi volunteer system established by the founder Master Cheng Yen 證嚴 (1937–) over the past half-century, is one of the most rigorous lay organisations, both historically and in contemporary times. This is true in terms of the number of followers as well as in the cohesiveness of the volunteer

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[64]   Warder, *Yindu Fojiao shi,* 230.
[65]   Ibid., 231.
[66]   Durant and Durant*, Our Oriental Heritage*, 505, 506.
[67]   Ibid., 164

organisation. Tzu Chi also strives to establish an ethical system for monastic life, including the famous "Ten Precepts" of Tzu Chi. This is a new development in the course of Buddhist history. Tzu Chi's ideal is not only to give the Dharma, but also to use the compassionate altruism of the Dharma to materially save sentient beings, so that they can go from being recipients to being helpers of others. Tzu Chi's vision is to achieve the fulfilment of "body, living environment, and mind" (*shen jing xin* 身境心) for all sentient beings instead of just transmitting Dharma. We will discuss this in more depth below.

Southern Buddhism's Enlightenment in the Human World

Let us first consider Southern Buddhism. In the past, Southern Buddhism was called Theravāda Buddhism, or by the polemical label "Hīnayāna." At that time, Theravāda Buddhists on the island of Sri Lanka (also known as Ceylon) worshiped relics, the cult of saints, and monastic teachers, who were both givers of Dharma and exorcist healers.[68] The devotion of the lay people was embodied in their worship of relics, holy articles, and precepts that included belief in ghosts, gods, witchcraft, and divine healing. The *saṃgha* certainly guarded tradition.[69] At the zenith of Buddhist power, temples received large donations of slaves and land from kings and wealthy families. At one time, Buddhist temples owned one-third of the country's land. Buddhism on the island of Ceylon functioned to authorise, specialise, and create a class of monks, but did not focus on popularising, equalising, or socialising them.

This development of Buddhism combined with the peaking of royal power in Ceylon at the end of the first century. The king, Mahakuli Mahatissa (ca. first century BCE), had sixty thousand bhikkhus and thirty thousand bhikkhunis attending a grand offering, which was a staggering number even by today's standard. However, once the support from the kingship withdrew, Buddhism's role in people's daily lives soon deminished because Buddhism was not rooted in social institutions. In the tenth century, the Indian Chola Dynasty (300 BCE–1279 CE) occupied the island of Ceylon. The people of Chola believed in Brahminism, so they destroyed Buddhist monasteries in large numbers

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[68]   Weber, *Yindu de zongjiao*, 421.
[69]   Ibid.

and persecuted monks.[70] In the eleventh century, after the revival of Sri Lanka by Vijayabahu I (r. 1055–1110), Buddhism had declined to the point that the *saṃgha* found it hard to maintain a living. Therefore, the king sent an emissary to Burma and asked Anuruddha, then a good friend of his, to send Burmese monks to Ceylon to promote Buddhism and teach bhikkhu precepts. Buddhism was gradually revived.[71] Although the Chola people were purged, the power of the Brāhmaṇa continued to exist alongside Buddhism.

Brahminism also influenced Southern Buddhism. The Aryans of India invaded the island of Ceylon in 400–500 BCE, bringing the Brahmin caste system and its beliefs. Brahmin and Buddhist development had always existed side by side in Ceylon. The inscriptions in Siam (Thailand) in the fourteenth century show that the king and the Vedic adepts lived in close harmony. Brahminism influenced the practice of Southern Buddhism. The king prayed for the world of Indra and longed for Nirvana, and the influence of Brahminism is still present in Southern Buddhism.[72]

Theravāda Burma was a Buddhist monarchy, and monks and clergy dominated the masses. The abbot also had absolute power in the monastery. In Burma, when a child entered a monastery, no matter how long he or she stayed there, they would be given a new name. This was a ritual, meaning there would be a guardian spirit for the child. This indicated that some folk religious beliefs still existed in this Buddhist system.

From the development of Indian Buddhism to that of Southern Buddhism, we see that Brāhmaṇa maintained a strong social and intellectual presence. In Southern Buddhism, the union of kingship and monks established authority, specialisation, and a class, rather than socialisation, universalisation, and equality of Buddhism in the secular world.

Buddhism and the Secular World in China

According to Arthur Wright, Buddhism's comparatively later adoption in China was after the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty 東漢 (25–220) and during

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[70]   Jinghai, *Nanchuan Fojiao shi*, 68.

[71]   Ibid., 102.

[72]   Weber, *Yindu de zongjiao*, 422–23.

the Wei-Jin 魏晉南北朝 (386–534/535; 265–420) and Southern and Northern Dynasties 南北朝 (ca. 300–600). Each social class in these dynasties found a foundation in Buddhism. In the case of the kings—these foreign emperors invading China—they did not want to rule by Confucianism because that was the Han system of thought. They also knew, however, that the tribal system, which won the world immediately, could not rule China from the horse. They did not want Confucianism, not only because it was the system of the old dynasty but because using Confucian officials was akin to inviting their extended network of family and friends, to the detriment of foreign rule.

During this period, Buddhism provided the foreign emperors with an ideological basis for governance. Buddhism came from the West and many of the monks were foreigners, so using them would not entail nepotism. Moreover, these foreign emperors considered themselves Wheel Turning Sage Kings (Skt. *chakravarti-rāja*) like the Buddha. The five Buddhas of the Yungang Grottoes are the statues of five Northern Wei emperors. The Yungang Grottoes are the earliest Buddhist caves in China. These kings took the Buddha as their role model and claimed themselves to be Wheel Turning Sage Kings.[73] Some nobles who migrated to the south and remained wealthy in the midst of war believed they were reincarnations of great bodhisattvas with blessings from their past lives.

The masses, meanwhile, were displaced and took comfort in the Pure Land in the afterlife. This contributed to the emergence of the Pure Land sect during the Jin Dynasty, founded by Master Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416). The then Emperor, Huanxuan 桓玄 (369–404), wanted to meet Huiyuan, but the latter was unwilling to meet the emperor and did not support monks paying homage to him. *Shamen bujing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論 [Why Monks Do Not Bow Down Before Kings], written by Master Huiyuan, envisioned a Buddhist kingdom distinct from the worldly monarch. This was the pure land for common people who suffered from war, as well as for intellectuals who did not want to be subjected to foreign emperors.

In contrast to the class, regime, and authority of Southern Buddhism, Buddhism in China began to move away from kingship. During the periods of the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties, every social class—from kings and nobles to common people—found belonging in Buddhism. The

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[73] Wright, *Zhongguo lishi zhong de Fojiao*, 42–43.

kings could be reincarnated Wheel Turning Sage Kings; the nobles could be great bodhisattvas and celestial beings; and the common people could pray for an afterlife in the Pure Land. This was an important historical adaptation of Buddhism in China.

Buddhism is said to have reached its heyday in the Tang Dynasty 唐 (618–907), during which it was fully integrated with commerce and the empire. In a workshop held by the Centre for Buddhist Education and Research at Peking University, entitled "Empire, Commerce, and Religion: History and Prospects of Buddhism and Globalization,"[74] Jinhua Chen argued that Buddhism reached its peak during the Wu Zetian period (690–705). Buddhism, by virtue of its connection to commerce and empire, commanded a far-reaching influence.

The Dunhuang Grottoes were built over centuries. These kilometres-long Buddhist caves illustrate how Buddhist art was supported by flourishing commerce. Whether from the West or the East, merchants prayed here for the blessings of the buddhas and bodhisattvas in their journey. Buddhist temples accumulated great wealth and incurred the jealousy of kings.[75] Meanwhile, Confucian scholars learned the *Four Books* (*Sishu* 四書) and *Five Classics* (*Wujing* 五經) of Confucianism as a way to enter officialdom. Against this backdrop, the restoration of orthodox Chinese culture arose. In particular, the An Lushan Rebellion 安史之亂 (755–763) made the Confucians and the emperor wary of countries in the Western Regions that could intervene in domestic affairs. General An Lushan 安祿山 (703–757) was from a Western country, and Buddhism came from the Western regions, too. The fear of Western powers coveting Han land contributed to a rejection of Buddhism, and this became a catalyst for the revival of Han culture.[76]

The Tang emperor Wuzong 唐武宗 (r. 841–846) purged Buddhism three times, confiscating temple property and returning a large number of monks to lay life, which did great harm to Buddhism. From then on, Buddhism declined and associated with agriculture and with the lower and middle classes. In this political climate, Master Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (720–814) founded agricultural Chan (*nongchan* 農禪) so he could live on his own by farming and being

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74 Wang, "Diguo, shangye yu zongjiao: Fojiao yu quanqiuhua de lishi yu zhanwang."
75 Chen, "Cong 'Wuzhoudiguo' dao 'Anshizhiluan': Chanzong de lishixing zhuanxiang yu xiandaihua qiji," 216.
76 Ibid., 214.

self-reliant, which created a lifeline for Buddhism.[77] Early Buddhism did not permit farming because it would kill, which is forbidden by the *Dharmaguptaka vinaya*. However, at the end of the Tang dynasty, in order to survive, Zen Master Baizhang adapted Buddhism to a Chinese way of social organization. The law set by the Monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) was still Indian, but the law set by Zen Master Baizhang was Chinese, including a patriarchal abbot system, in which the abbot could even beat the bhikkhus when they made mistakes. In traditional Chinese thought, there were always patriarchal ethics. Surely, these disciplinary measures were not intended as oppression or harm, but rather like a father teaching his children out of love.

The Buddhist *saṃgha* absorbed Confucianism and was fully established after Zen Master Baizhang. Chinese Buddhism gradually moved towards agriculture and became uncoupled from commerce.[78] Zen Buddhism led Buddhism back toward the early Buddhist path of self-cultivation, focusing on inner insight and liberation. Agriculture and Zen were combined. Zen was supposed to return to the self-cultivation and insight, not relying on thought, knowledge, or the scriptures but on the intuitive illumination of self-nature in daily life and farming.

After the Ming Dynasty, the uneducated class entered the *saṃgha* and Buddhism gradually merged with Daoism, absorbing esoteric and superstitious elements. During the Ming Dynasty, especially after Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), Buddhism declined even more. Wang Yangming's Philosophy of Mind (*Xin xue* 心學) was close to Buddhism; it integrated Confucian ideas, such as "study things, acquire knowledge, be sincere, and have a rightful mind" (*ge wu, zhi zhi, cheng yi, zheng xin* 格物、致知、誠意、正心). If Buddhism was about the mind, then Confucianism was about "propriety" (*li* 禮). To "study things" and to "acquire knowledge" are the overall Dharma of Buddhism. To "be sincere" and to "have a rightful mind" are part of the Eightfold Path. Therefore, "to study things, to acquire knowledge, to be sincere, to have a rightful mind" represent Buddhist values and practices; and "to cultivate oneself, to raise one's family, to govern the country and to harmonise the world" (*xiu shen, qi jia, zhi guo, ping tian xia* 修身、齊家、治國、平天下) represent Confucian worldly wisdom. Wang Yangming incorporated Buddhist ideas about cultivating the mind into

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[77]   Shih, *Lüzhi qinggui ji qi xiandai yiyi zhi tantao*, 484.

[78]   Chen, "Cong 'Wuzhoudiguo' dao 'Anshizhiluan'," 216.

the Confucian system of entering the world, which led to the decline of Buddhism. The tools of entering the world were mastered by Confucians—namely, by learning the *Four Books* and *Five Classics* of Confucianism for officialdom and family heritage. Buddhism thus became subjugated to the Confucian system.

The development and decline of Buddhism in China were similar to these processes in India, where high-level thought was Buddhist, but worldly affairs were in the hands of the Brāhmaṇa. In China's case, it was in the hands of the Confucians. Buddhism's lack of exposure to and knowledge of the world led to its eventual reduction to a supplementary system rather than a mainstream system. After the Ming dynasty, Confucianism aimed to "cultivate oneself, to raise one's family, to govern the country and to harmonise the world" (*xiu shen*, *qi jia*, *zhi guo*, *ping tian xia* 修身、齊家、治國、平天下), providing a philosophy that emphasised self-cultivation and contribution to the real world. The Buddhist way of liberation did not enter the fields of social knowledge and did not establish a comprehensive, complex, or deeply lived social system, nor did it establish a comprehensive system of religious practice, as in Christianity, Brahminism, or Islam.

For any religion to become mainstream, it needs a comprehensive social knowledge system. Islam, for example, was founded in the seventh century CE, and from the ninth century onward, it absorbed a great deal of Plato's ideas. Islamic thinkers constructed worldly knowledge systems such as architecture, astronomy, science, medicine, and logic. Long before Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564) founded the study of anatomy in the West in the fourteenth century, Islamic medicine was already advanced in the tenth century. Ibn-Sīnā's (ca. 970–1037) studies of anatomy were far superior to those of the Western Middle Ages. Indeed, one might argue the Crusades arose because Muslim civilisation was perceived to be too powerful.

Christianity continued to build a secular system after the Renaissance. John Locke's (1632–1704) natural human rights were taken from the Christian doctrine that under God, the father is not superior to the son. Locke replaced the personal God with a natural God, and transformed it into "natural human rights."[79] The Catholic system had long incorporated the republican system of Rome, with the election of the Pope and the parliamentary system of the vast

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[79]   Shapiro, "Moral Foundation of Politics."

church system. The canon law they enacted had detailed regulations for secular life. The first accounting texts were written by priests.[80] Such secular systems did not appear, nor were they emphasised, in the development of Buddhism.

Buddhism was absorbed by Confucianism during the Tang and Song dynasties and Buddhism relinquished the governance of the secular world to Confucianism. This is why there is a saying that one should "endeavour with Confucianism, retreat into Taoism, and decease in Buddhism" (*jin yu ru*, *tui yu dao*, *zhi yu fo* 進於儒、退於道、止於佛). The common people grew close to rituals, mysteries, charms, and chanting—a more formalist part of Buddhism. Buddhism moved towards a type of Daoist superstition and this caused the decline of Buddhism in China. This resembles the decline of Indian Buddhism.

At the end of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Buddhism often became a place for the rogue to seek protection. Emperor Gaozong 清高宗 (1711–1799) of the Qing observed that monks and Taoists were often poor people without support from their hometowns who took refuge in empty temples as a means to make a living.[81] Buddhism in China gradually declined after the Ming and during the Qing. Chinese intellectuals were ruled by Confucianism, and the common people, in general, turned to Daoism. In India, the upper-class intellectuals revered Brahmin discernment, and the common people tended toward Brahmin mysteries, incantations, and rituals. The decline of Chinese Buddhism repeated the fate of Indian Buddhism.

The Transformation of Buddhism for the Human World

Humanistic Buddhism was advocated by Master Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), Master Yinshun, and the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism. Founded by Master Cheng Yen with compassionate altruism, the Tzu Chi School hopes to integrate Buddhism into ordinary life so that the bodhisattva way can be achieved on earth.

When temple Buddhism declined in the Ming and Qing dynasties, lay followers played a crucial role in reviving Chinese Buddhism. Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911) became a pioneer of Buddhist education in the twentieth century

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[80] Sangster and Scataglinobelghitar, "Luca Pacioli: The Father of Accounting Education."
[81] Yoshitaka, "Qingchu Fojiao," 158.

when he founded the Jinling Sūtra Publishing Office (Jinling ke jingchu 金陵刻經處) in 1866. Born to a gentry family, Yang Wenhui developed an interest in Buddhism after reading the *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 [Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna]. He saw the decline of Buddhism and decided to revive it by printing scriptures. In 1908, Yang Wenhui founded the Jetavana Hermitage (Zhihuan jingshe 祇洹精舍), which became the first new Buddhist education school in modern China and made a significant impact on the development of modern Buddhism. During this period, he taught more than ten monks and lay elites, such as Master Taixu, Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 (1871–1943), Master Liaowu 了悟 (1873–1935), and Master Qiyun 棲雲 (d.u.).[82]

In 1910, Yang Wenhui founded the Buddhist Research Society at the Jinling Sūtra Publishing Office, bringing together elites from both academic and teaching communities, holding seminars, and giving weekly lectures on the scriptures. At that time, Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸, Tan Sitong 譚嗣同, Gui Bohua 桂伯華, Li Zengang 李證剛, Li Duanfu 黎端甫, Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, Mei Guangxi 梅光義, Xie Wuliang 謝無量, and Gao Henian 高鶴年, all became pillars of the Buddhist revival, and laid the foundation for Buddhism in modern China.[83]

Among the students at Yang Wenhui's Jetavana Hermitage, the most famous lay practitioner was Ouyang Jingwu and the most famous Dharma Master was Taixu. Ouyang Jingwu's Buddhist attainments were quite high, and his students included the Confucian-Buddhist masters Xiong Shili 熊十力 and Tang Junyi 唐君毅, as well as the Buddhist Master Lü Cheng 呂澂. Master Taixu's influence on Buddhism became even greater when he founded the Buddhist College of Minnan (Minnan foxue yuan 閩南佛學院) and the Wuchang Buddhist College (Wuchang foxue yuan 武昌佛学院), and assisted in building the Buddhist Association of China (Zhongguo fojiao xiehui 中國佛教協會), promoting the overall modernisation of Buddhism in China.[84]

In the early twentieth century, when Master Taixu advocated "Buddhism for Human Life" (*rensheng fojiao* 人生佛教), it was during the Japanese invasion of China while people were being ravaged by war. Master Taixu advocated that Buddhists should think about ways to survive and save the country. The word "life" (*rensheng* 人生) is used to respond to the long-standing misunderstand-

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[82]　Zhang, "Jindai jushi yu fojiao jiaoyu," 55.
[83]　Ibid.
[84]　Ibid.

ing of Buddhism as only talking about extinction and emptiness. The word "human" (*ren* 人) is used to respond to the parochial folk Buddhist practice of emphasising ghosts and gods.[85] The meaning of "life" (*sheng* 生) also is used to respond to the impression that Buddhism only provides liberation from death, thus refuting the traditional Chinese misconception that to study Buddhism is to study death. Master Taixu advocated a more active involvement of Buddhism in social reform and a shared responsibility of Buddhism for the suffering of the nation.[86]

As a learned monk and thinker, Master Taixu began with Buddhist studies and then studied Buddhism; he first studied the theory and then the practice. Tzu Chi's teachings, by contrast, focus on practice: "first Buddhist practice, then Buddhist studies" (*xian xue fo, hou fo xue* 先學佛、後佛學) and "good deeds come first, followed by doctrines" (*xian xing shan, hou yi li* 先行善、後義理).[87] This instruction is to enter the gate of goodness first and then gradually understand the Buddha's way, which arises from the deeds of goodness to the practice of goodness. From charity, people first learn gratitude and self-contentment, understand the impermanence of the world, and only then enter the path of the nature of emptiness.

Master Taixu believed that Buddhism is both philosophy and religion. He classified Buddhism as teaching (*jiao* 教), doctrine (*li* 理), practice (*xing* 行), and fruit (*guo* 果). The teaching refers to the teaching of the Buddha being present in the world. Master Taixu's way of following the Buddha was to follow the Buddha's teachings, to embody his teachings, and to produce fruits through practice. All Buddhist doctrines are realised by practice. Practice is the key, meaning "self-benefit and altruism" (*zili lita* 自利利他). Master Taixu said that only the Buddha's teachings can be self-beneficial and altruistic; the self-benefit of the Buddha's teachings is realised through the achievement of a complete personality, while the altruism of the Buddha's teachings is realised through the transformation of the boundless sentient beings in the world.

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[85]   *Fozai renjian*, Y 0014.14.18a12–19a01: 因為中國的佛教末流, 一向重視於——一死, 二鬼, 引出無邊流弊。大師為了糾正他, 所以主張不重死而重生, 不重鬼而重人。

[86]   *Fozai renjian*, Y 0014.14.20a06–a12: 為對治這一類「鬼本」的謬見, 特提倡「人本」來糾正他。……大師從佛教的根本去了解, 時代的適應去了解, 認為應重視現實的人生。「依著人乘正法, 先修成完善的人格, 保持人乘的業報, 方是時代所需, 尤為我國的情形所宜。由此向上增進, 乃可進趣大乘行。使世界人類的人性不失, 且成為完善美滿的人間。有了完善的人生為所依, 進一步的使人們去修佛法所重的大乘菩薩行果」。

[87]   Her, "Lita dao juewu," 2019.

Master Taixu advocated that one should first benefit all sentient beings through one's enlightenment. "But this self-benefit is the 'self-benefit' for all sentient beings," so he says, "seek first the self-benefiting Dharma for the benefit of others."[88] Therefore, he said, "for the sake of altruism, seek first the self-benefiting Dharma. Self-benefit and then other-benefit. All sentient beings in the world can be summed up by the word "others."[89] In general, Master Taixu's teachings are based on the principle of self-benefiting first and then benefiting others, for to enlighten others, one must start with enlightening oneself. Ultimately, it reaches the realm of "self and other are one."

Master Taixu's description of the ideal state of Buddhism is to transform a harsh material world to one of beauty and goodness. Master Taixu believed that the ordinary world and the world of the Pure Land are not two, but one. The task is not the abandonment of this bad world and the creation of another good world. Rather, it is the transformation of this bad world into a world of goodness. The key rests in the heart. If the mind is pure, the land is pure, as described in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*. If the mind is peaceful, all the lands are peaceful, as described in the *Śuraṃgama Sūtra*. Master Taixu said: "There are no two worlds that can be created, nor is there a world of goodness that can be created by abandoning this world of badness. The distinction between the good and the bad worlds is made by the pure or stained mind."[90]

Therefore, the state of beauty and goodness of all Buddhist paths depends on the human heart, and the human heart depends on practice. Master Taixu's teachings and writings were influential on this point, and had a particular impact on Master Yinshun, who is regarded as one of the great Buddhist thinkers of our time. Throughout his life, Master Yinshun advocated that "all buddhas come out of the human world, and have not become buddhas in heaven," a view shared by Humanistic Buddhism and found in the *Ekottarikāgama*, which states that the way to Buddhahood lies in this life and in this world. Humanistic Buddhism as proposed by Master Yinshun emphasises the

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[88] "Fofa de zili lita guan" in *Diyibian Fofa zongxue*, TX 0001.1.132a11–133a5: 就上章第五節所言, 成就圓滿的人格而知佛法之自利, 應化無邊的世界眾生而知佛法之利他。但佛法所稱之利非如世間「對待的」「比較的」之利, 蓋謂利他即真正利他, 自利即真正自利。利者, 謂由一種方法行為能得到一種「離去苦惱成就安樂」之效果的代名詞也。世間一切法不能究竟離苦得究竟樂, 唯佛法能究竟離苦得究竟樂, 故唯佛法能真正自利利他。餘法離苦而非究竟, 則是比較的離苦, 得樂而非究竟, 是對待的得樂, 皆非真正之利也。

[89] Taixu, *Taixu dashi quanshu*, 136.

[90] Ibid., 130.

unity of "Interdependent Arising" (*yuanqi* 緣起) and the "Emptiness of Nature" (*xingkong* 性空), which not only are not in contradiction but in fact depend on each other. This is also the fundamental teaching of Mahāyāna Buddhism. All beings must be empty in Interdependent Arising, and the Emptiness of Nature is dependent on Interdependent Arising.

With his thoughts on both internal practice and external propagation, Master Yinshun was able to develop a new form of Humanistic Buddhism. He once said that he had followed his karma all his life and wandered in the "cause" (Skt. *nidāna*). In fact, it seems to me that this following and wandering reflects the notion that one "should develop a mind which does not rely on anything."[91] Is not it a testimony that eternal wisdom is born without choosing the ground? Master Yinshun's life is like a fallen leaf that eventually becomes a large Dharma ship, carrying countless suffering beings to the other shore of enlightenment. The awakening of one person is often the beginning of the awakening of a generation. The sublimation of one mind creates a whole new history. In his seemingly ordinary daily life, Master Yinshun nurtured brilliant thought, and in his simple and innocent mind, the majestic vitality of modern Buddhism was realised. The development of Buddhism may be divided into the period before and after Master Yinshun, before which internal cultivation was self-explanatory, and after which external effort leads to internal cultivation. It is only when both the internal and external aspects are present and the mind is free from attachments that one is awakened to tranquillity.

In the book *Chengfo zhi dao* 成佛之道 [The Way to Buddhahood],[92] Master Yinshun clearly stated that "one goes to Buddhahood from altruistic actions" and that "one's action, after one's vow, is most important for the Mahāyāna path." The bodhisattva path is best practiced by giving alms, which must be done with *bodhicitta*, with compassion as the motivation and wisdom as the means. Wisdom, compassion, and *bodhicitta* are equally important. These three are the path of the bodhisattva and the key to Buddhahood.

Master Yinshun also advocated that the bodhisattva completes self-benefit with altruism: "before one can enlighten oneself, one must first enlighten others, and here the bodhisattva begins to develop his mind."[93] The bodhisattva

91   Johnson, "Diamond Sutra: Chapter 10."
92   Yinshun, *Chengfo zhi dao*, 248.
93   Yinshun, *Jiaozhi jiaodian yu jiaoxue*, Y 0021.21.172a5: 自未得度先度人, 是菩薩發心。

is born out of great compassion and remains forever good. Great compassion is the root; wisdom and the wisdom of emptiness are all cultivated through compassion. This is different from Master Hong Yi 弘一 (1880–1942), active in the early years of the Republic of China, who aspired to quickly achieve Buddhahood and then return to the human world to help sentient beings. Master Yinshun believed in saving himself by saving others and that there was no need to necessarily save himself before saving others. As the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Meanings* says, though a boatman is sick, his boat could be strong enough to ferry people. The boat is the Buddha's teachings. Even though the boatman has not yet attained enlightenment, as Master Cheng Yen said to me, "the boatman will reach the other shore along with the passengers when the boat reaches the shore."[94] The altruistic path to Buddhahood is characteristic of Humanistic Buddhism advocated by Master Yinshun.

The Establishment of the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism

The era in which Master Cheng Yen lived was much more stable than that of Master Taixu, Master Hong Yi, and Master Yinshun. In 1966, Master Cheng Yen founded the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Merit Society (Fojiao kenan ciji gongde hui 佛教克難慈濟功德會) in Hualien, a remote area in eastern Taiwan, with the hope that lessening pain and promoting the Buddha's Four Immeasurable Minds—Loving-kindness, Compassion, Joy, and Equanimity (*si wuliang xin cibei xi she* 四無量心慈悲喜捨)—might help achieve social peace, happiness, and the purification of human minds. At the time of her conversion, Master Yinshun encouraged Master Cheng Yen to "work for Buddha's teachings, work for sentient beings" (*wei fojiao*, *wei zhongsheng* 為佛教、為眾生). Master Yinshun said these words were the spirit and goal of his lifelong endeavour. Master Cheng Yen's view of social reform emphasized that the Pure Land is at hand in the human world. Nirvāṇa is in the present moment, enlightenment is in the present mind, and purity is in present good deeds.

Tzu Chi Buddhism emphasizes altruistic actions, which are the root of the true meaning of life. As Master Cheng Yen said, "The sūtra is the Way, the Way is the path, and the path must be walked upon" (*jing shi dao*, *dao shi lu*,

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[94]   Her, *Lita dao juewu: Zhengyan shangren lita sixiang yanjiu*, 100.

lu yaoyong zou de 經是道, 道是路, 路要用走的). Master Cheng Yen promotes the ideas that the "Jing Si Dharma-lineage is a path of diligent spiritual practice" (*Jingsi famai qinxing dao* 靜思法脈勤行道) and the "Tzu Chi School of Buddhism is a road through the world" (*Ciji zong men renjian lu* 慈濟宗門人間路) for the benefit of the human world. She and her monastic disciples are self-reliant; they do not receive donations and devote themselves to the masses to help all sentient beings. This exemplifies the Buddhist practice of self-enlightenment and enlightening others. Establishing the Tzu Chi organisation provided a new path for Buddhist social improvement and salvation on earth. The promotion of Tzu Chi's "Four Missions and Eight Endeavours" has allowed people to move from doing good in theory to doing good deeds in practice, allowing Buddhist philosophy to connect directly with contemporary society and to make a substantial impact. With its Buddhist foundation, Tzu Chi has incorporated the spirit of Confucianism, Western science, and rationality and is thus able to adapt to society and, to a certain extent, transform modern society while promoting the socialisation of Buddhism.

In his 2007 book *Democracy's Dharma*, Professor Richard Madsen from the University of California, San Diego, commented on the significance of Tzu Chi to contemporary Buddhism and claimed that Tzu Chi is one of the most important forces in the renaissance of religion in Taiwan.[95] When I received the 2007 Niwano Peace Prize in Tokyo, Japan on behalf of Master Cheng Yen, my talk[96] stated that "Tzu Chi will be the genesis of the Buddhist renaissance." As Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) once said, "Socrates was the first who brought down philosophy from the heavens."[97] Christian monks before the Renaissance were absorbed in monasteries, praying for themselves and pursuing their unity with God, and were not particularly concerned with earthly suffering. It was not until after the Renaissance that Western religion shifted from the search for unity between man and God to a concern for the suffering of society and the welfare of people.

The role of Tzu Chi in the development of Buddhism took a similar trajectory, and this might symbolise the revival of Chinese Buddhism. However, unlike traditional Chinese Buddhist thought, which focused on building tem-

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[95]   Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma*, 1, 7, 8.
[96]   Her, *Lita dao juewu*, 2017, 155.
[97]   Cicero, *Cicero's Tusculan Disputations*, 167.

ples, chanting sūtras, and worshipping buddhas, Master Cheng Yen focuses on social reform and the reduction of real-world pain. For Tzu Chi, the practice *dōjō* 道場 does not necessarily exist in temples, but is instead deeply rooted in people's minds. The disaster scene is the *dōjō*, and if one shows compassion courageously and fearlessly, the present mind is the Buddha's mind; purgatory can be the divine kingdom of the Buddha. A hospital could be a nexus of suffering, but Tzu Chi volunteers want to turn it into a paradise, which reflects the spirit of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva's willingness to go even down to hell in order to help others.

The central scriptures of the Jing Si 靜思 Dharma lineage and of Tzu Chi Buddhism, founded by Master Cheng Yen, are the *Lotus Sūtra* (Ch. *Fahua jing* 法華經) and the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Meanings*. The latter stresses benefiting all sentient beings, "giving without asking for anything in return," and "giving with gratitude." This enables one to experience the subtle wisdom of the Threefold Wheel of Essential Emptiness, in which there is no donor, no recipient, and no giving itself. Tzu Chi Buddhism emphasises the practice of the bodhisattva path in accordance with the great teachings of the Dharma of the *Lotus Sūtra*. With wisdom, all actions can be performed to help all sentient beings. With compassionate altruism, Tzu Chi Buddhism aspires to create a society in which the body, mind, and spirit are fulfilled. This is Tzu Chi Buddhism's practice of moving from altruism to enlightenment.

The Influence of Tzu Chi on the Development of Buddhism

As Master Yinshun said, early Buddhism did not attach importance to material improvement. Tzu Chi has developed Four Missions: charity, medicine, education, and cultural humanities, all of which are rooted in the life of the human world. This is one of the impacts Tzu Chi Buddhism has had on the historical development of Buddhism. As mentioned earlier, traditional Buddhism lacked an organisational community of lay people, a point Weber specifically raised as evidence for why Buddhism did not last in India. Another impact of Tzu Chi Buddhism is that it establishes an earthly system of "bodhisattvas" which—with its large, comprehensive, and rigorous system of volunteers—can be called a Buddhist movement for lay people.

Master Cheng Yen often refers to an old lay practitioner, named Xu Cong-

min 許聰敏 (1893–1983), as a good example of a lay practitioner. Master Cheng Yen even held a tonsure ceremony in Xu's house. Master Cheng Yen said, "I think that Xu's practice is no less than that of monks." Xu was for Master Cheng Yen an example of a lay practitioner in line with the ideal of arhats at home, as advocated by Uttrapathaka (Ch. 部派佛教北道派). In my opinion, the success of Tzu Chi in establishing Buddhism for lay practitioners today can be attributed to profound impact of the *nidāna* between Xu and Master Cheng Yen. Richard Gombrich and Yu-Shuang Yao argue that the monasticisation of lay followers by Master Cheng Yen embodies the ideal that all sentient beings can become buddhas, and that all human beings can be sages, as Confucianism puts it.[98] The monasticisation of lay followers is an important creation of Tzu Chi, and for Master Cheng Yen, it means the ideal of "humanizing the bodhisattva." I think that this is the second major impact that Tzu Chi has had on the historical development of Buddhism.

The third significant impact of Tzu Chi is the establishment of an ethical system for lay people. Traditional Buddhism lacked a system of ethics for lay people, as Weber has noted. Tzu Chi established ethics, rituals of monastic life, and the "Ten Precepts", which combine the Five Precepts of the Buddhist tradition along with other principles adapted for contemporary society. These are the Buddhist foundations on which to establish an ethics for lay people. When the future time is ripe, I wonder if Tzu Chi can establish a complete Tzu Chi Code of Conduct for every aspect of life, an ethical system of self-restraint with a communal covenant, like the Catholic Ecumenical Councils. In the past, the Buddhist system had two hundred and fifty precepts for bhikkhus and over five hundred precepts for bhikkhunis. But what it needs now are precepts and rituals of life for lay followers. Tzu Chi needs an ethical code of life for monastic masters, monks, and lay followers. What might this look like? The Canon Law of the Catholic Ecumenical Council has a strict system of regulations for the Pope, bishops, priests, nuns, and the faithful in general. I think that when the time is ripe, Tzu Chi may build a Tzu Chi Canon Law Assembly to discuss the system of organization, mechanisms of decision-making, orders of life, and an ethical system for various practitioners and publish them.

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[98] Gombrich and Yao, "A Radical Buddhism."

The Future Establishment of Buddhism and Tzu Chi

To establish a realistic system of knowledge and value, in addition to its guidelines for practice, Tzu Chi Buddhism would require certain theoretical capacities and a paradigm-building model that aspires for universal values. Tzu Chi will continue to explore various theoretical discourses and models. These include but are not limited to the development of Buddhist economics, organisational science, medicine, ethics, and environmental science. For example, how might the concept of a circular organization be developed as a model? Or, given that Master Cheng Yen believes technology should be good, what should be the ethical standards of good technology for Tzu Chi? And what might they be for good environment and for enacting love and goodness in social life? What is the model for realising compassion and altruism among human beings?

The development of Buddhism in the human world requires introducing Buddhism into the world at all levels, as well as the construction of a meaningful, practical system of knowledge and values. In other words, Tzu Chi Buddhism should consider how to implement the principles of "Buddhism into life and bodhisattva into the world" in a broader long-term way. In addition to the Four Missions, I think Tzu Chi as well as other Buddhist schools should expand the discourses on technology, economy, governance, psychology, communication, and law, all of which are important for Tzu Chi's globalisation and popularisation.

Concerning the difference between various religions, Master Cheng Yen said that "From the great mind, religions are all the same, but from a small mind, religions are all different." In my opinion, the "living Buddhism" of Venerable Cheng Yen does not mean that everyone should become a Buddhist. Even if one is not a Buddhist, the Buddha's teachings will benefit their lives and contribute to the development of society. Master Cheng Yen held that religion should be a force for peace in the world; religion itself should not be a source of conflict and problems. The purpose of Tzu Chi is to maintain harmony among religions, communities, and nations, to eliminate class conflicts, to promote mutual aid and love among people, and promote harmony between people and nature. With selfless love, we may build an ideal world of health and abundance, with love, peace, and harmony in our hearts, and with harmony and goodness in all things.

The Challenge of Tzu Chi Buddhism

Tzu Chi Buddhism aims to align its work with the Tzu Chi Buddhist Dharma. The Tzu Chi Buddhist lineage reflects the Jing Si Dharma and the Tzu Chi path in the human world. The three pillars of Tzu Chi Buddhism include a philosophical system, an organisational structure, and a way of practice. These three pillars go hand in hand. The philosophical system of Master Cheng Yen is fundamental to sustaining Tzu Chi Buddhism. The practice of Tzu Chi Buddhism must enter the world and not leave the world. Thus, Tzu Chi balances its public and religious aspects. The challenge facing Tzu Chi is that it must integrate its public activities with religious beliefs. The former embodies the latter, and the former is created through the latter. Benefiting beings is of a public nature, and self-purification is of a religious nature. Only when these two go hand in hand can the sustainable development of Tzu Chi be maintained. Tzu Chi has invested much effort in charitable work as a charitable organisation, and I believe that Tzu Chi is still in the process of developing these three goals.

It has been more than fifty years since the founding of Tzu Chi by Master Cheng Yen. In 2006, she declared to senior directors of Tzu Chi's Four Missions Entities the establishment of Tzu Chi School of Buddhism. In 2016, Tzu Chi held the fourth Tzu Chi Forum, in which she shared the vision of Tzu Chi Buddhism with the world. Master Cheng Yen said later that year to Tzu Chi volunteers:

> This is the fifty-first year of Tzu Chi, the official transmission of the Dharma, as well as the official announcement of the establishment of Tzu Chi School of Buddhism. Tzu Chi Buddhism was formally established in October of this year (2016), and an international forum was held to establish Tzu Chi Buddhism and to mark the occasion. The participants were all religious figures and professors of international renown. Representatives from the United Kingdom, the United States, mainland China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Nepal were all present, in addition to Buddhists, Catholic priests, and Muslims. I was grateful to hear them talk. They all had positive comments about Tzu Chi, and they are all very supportive of the establishment of the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism. So now I want to say to you that this year (2016) marks our official announcement of the establishment of the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism. We are not a Pure Land Sect or a Zen Sect. If someone asks us

what sect we are, we say Tzu Chi Buddhism.[99] Tzu Chi Buddhism will walk the path in the human world and keep its Jing Si Dharma lineage, moving forward with rigor. This is its spiritual philosophy. Tzu Chi Buddhism practices its Dharma in the real world, and everything it does must be diligent. Tzu Chi has followed the way of great love for fifty years and will continue so forever.[100]

In ancient Chinese Buddhism, Buddhist sects developed primarily based on ideological foundation. By contrast, contemporary Chinese Buddhist sects focus on the needs of the present time. Different approaches to the problems of sentient beings in the present world are the impetus for the establishment of contemporary sects in Buddhism. As Professor He Jianming 何建明 of Renmin University 中國人民大學 said:

> It is safe to say that the modern Taiwanese Buddhist sects represented by Fo Guang Shan, Tzu Chi, Dharma Drum Mountain, and Chung Tai Shan have completely transcended traditional sectarian Chinese Buddhism by actively adapting to the scientific and global requirements of modern constitutional society. They are no longer characterized by sectarianism in terms of doctrinal teachings (e.g., the Three Treatise Sect, East Asian Yogācāra, Huayan Sect, and Tiantai Sect) or by adherence to a particular practice (e.g., Tiantai's *śamatha-vipassanā*, the *zazen* of Zen Buddhism, the *nianfo* of Pure Land Buddhism, and the tantra of Tantric Buddhism). Rather, on the basis of the equality and parallelism of the eight sects advocated by modern Buddhism since Master Taixu, the pursuit of right knowledge, right view, right faith, right action and right consciousness becomes the goal; culture, education, and charity become the centre. It is a new monastic system, philosophy, and

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[99]   Cheng Yen, "Jingsi famai Ciji Zongmen," 64–65: 慈濟第五十一年, 正式傳法, 還有正式立宗。慈濟宗門已經正式成立, 因為在今年(二零一六年)十月間舉辦國際論壇為慈濟立宗, 為慈濟立宗門做論述。邀來的都是宗教界的人士以及在國際間很有名的教授。從遙遠的英國、美國、中國大陸、印尼、泰國, 還有尼泊爾等等, 有佛教、天主教神父、伊斯蘭教都來了。聽他們在論述, 我真的很感恩。他們對慈濟都有很好的評論, 對慈濟宗門都很肯定。所以現在要跟大家說, 今年(二零一六年)是我們正式的立宗。法脈正傳, 宗門正立; 我們不是淨土宗, 也不是禪宗, 如果有人問我們是什麼宗?我們說是「慈濟宗」。

[100]   Ibid. 慈濟宗門, 要走入人間路, 靜思法脈就是勤行道, 不能懈怠還要向前進, 這是精神理念。慈濟宗門是身體力行的, 大家要很精進。我們是以大愛之道廣披寰宇, 長情之路古往今來, 這樣的大愛長情是五十年前一直鋪過來, 長情是覺有情, 五十年前不間斷, 還是永遠地鋪下去。

practice established by consciously adapting to the needs and cultural trends of modern society.[101]

In my book *Lita dao juewu* 利他到覺悟 [From Altruism to Enlightenment],[102] I take the counteractive *siddhānta* of the Four *Siddhānta*s as the central argument, which advocates for the goal of curing greed, hate, and delusion in the "now, here, and this person," (*ci shi*, *ci di*, *ci ren* 此時、此地、此人). This, along with various practices, embodies the modern development of the Buddha Dharma. In my view, the shared core of the contemporary Buddhist movements is counteractive *siddhānta*. If one contemplates how a person's mind works and speaks Dharma to them at the right time, then it becomes individually-adapted *siddhānta*, one of the Four *Siddhānta*s. Then, though Buddhism respects the way of life of sentient beings, it leads them to understand the Dharma of rising and ease, and to finally reach the supreme-meaning *siddhānta*.[103] The Dharma solutions to counteractive *siddhānta* are the basis for contemporary Buddhist sects. They are also a creative way for Buddhist disciples to cope with challenges and difficulties, and to help solve the problems of the current human world.

In the present world, there are conflicts between nations, between religions, between human beings and nature, and between the rich and the poor. In my opinion, Tzu Chi has made a substantial impact on these problems in the following ways. First, it significantly promotes religious harmony through love and good deeds in order to enable people of all religions to work together against suffering instead of debating each other's doctrines. This is key to Tzu Chi's capacity to integrate people from Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, and other traditions, who have all become Tzu Chi volunteers. Second, it eliminates the gap between the rich and the poor. Tzu Chi is present in Indonesia, the Philippines, Africa, and South America, where it works with those suffering from poverty. Through gratitude, it creates a cycle of love and leads the helped to help others, thus reducing the gap between the rich and the poor through equal love. By inspiring "the richness within wealth" (*fu zhong zhi fu* 富中之富) and "the richness within poverty" (*pin zhong zhi fu* 貧中之富), harmony

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[101]   He, *Renjian Fojiao yu Chuantong Fojiao de gongcun, hujian, ronghe yu fazhan*, 1545.
[102]   Her, *Lita dao juewu*, 2017, 182.
[103]   Ibid., 185.

between the rich and the poor is better fostered.

Third, Tzu Chi contributes to the cross-strait harmony between mainland China and Taiwan. When the two sides were at their most serious odds, Tzu Chi's love and kindness was the best bridge. Today, cross-strait relations are difficult. Political figures have diverging views, opinions, and interventions. I think Tzu Chi has been a bridge of cross-strait harmony, and might even become a bridge of harmony around the world.

Lastly, Tzu Chi promotes the environmental protection movement, as it has done for more than thirty years. From resource recycling by hundreds of thousands of volunteers, to producing blankets and one thousand kinds of products with DA.AI Technology, Tzu Chi has promoted recycling, reduction, and reuse, and practiced the cherishing of the life of things. This embodies the ideal of creating harmony between nature and humans.

The Vision of Tzu Chi Buddhism

The goal of Tzu Chi Buddhism is, first, to establish Buddhism and the Tzu Chi Dharma in various social and professional fields. Second, it strives to put the spirit of the bodhisattva into practice in our lives, which reflects the humanisation of the bodhisattva. Third, Tzu Chi aspires to build an organization for sustainable development. In my view, the decline of Buddhism in India and China was because it lacked a secular knowledge system, a complete ethical code of secular life, and a rigorous organization of lay people. In contrast, Tzu Chi aspires in this direction by strengthening its discourse, universal value system, and new models for society. In the contemporary era of technology, capitalism, and individualistic liberalism, Tzu Chi must speak to the current situation of the world. However, while learning from the world, it is important for Tzu Chi to transcend this worldly pattern and establish a new paradigm for civilization. In my opinion, this is the goal of Tzu Chi Buddhism.

Only by incorporating and transcending the knowledge and values of the contemporary world can Tzu Chi establish the ideal of "purifying the human heart, achieving social peace, and a world free of disasters," and become a new model for human society and civilisation. Tzu Chi will be complete when a practical model of Master Cheng Yen's three aforementioned visions are constructed and universally applied in the world.

Abbreviations

N   *Hanyi nanchuan dazangjing*. See Gaoxiong Yuanhengsi hanyi nanchuan dazangjing bianyi weiyuanhui, ed., trans.

T   *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. See Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

TX   *Taixu dashi quanshu*. See *Taixu dashi quanshu*.

Y   *Yinshun fashi foxue zhuzuo ji*. See *Yinshun fashi foxue zhuzuo ji*.

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